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ABSTRACT

The new emerging role of the consultant to counselors is considered. The consultant will function in a helping relationship with a colleague in counseling and related pupil personnel services with emphasis upon counseling and guidance services. Indicated are several needs for this professional: (1) the need to support the counselor in achieving professional identity; (2) continued support of new developments in the field; and (3) the need for support in a crisis situation which would enable the counselor to function more capably in future crises. Specific needs of counselors are considered to develop the service of a consultant. Also discussed is the problem of how the consultant enters and is incorporated into a school system. Suggestions are made on how to inform the consultant of the existing system and what steps should be taken to use him most effectively. Described are some different types of consultation situations and the consultation process. Also discussed are cautions in consultations, followup of the consultations and implications for directions in the acceptance of the consultant. (Author/MC)

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GUIDANCE CONSULTANT: QUESTIONS AND DIRECTIONS

James C. Northrop

This paper considers the new, emerging role of the consultant to counselors. Essentially, this specialist a professional from the field of counseling, will function in a helping relationship with a colleague in counseling and related pupil personnel services, with particular emphasis upon counseling and guidance services. He will have received preparation of a professional nature in a program specifically designed to prepare him to function in this relationship.

MODEL

The model under consideration served as a basis for the N.D.E.A. Counseling and Guidance Institute at the University of Florida during the year 1968-69, and was elaborated upon by Lister (1968). A series of papers presented at the Las Vegas APGA convention in 1969, described the model and preparation program. The primary guidelines for the consultant's role have been supplied by Caplan (1959) in mental health consultation. In this role, there are two types of consultation -- crisis and non-crisis. Crisis consultation is concerned with the achievement of a free emotional relationship between the consultee and his client by helping him to become more comfortable in this relationship. Non-crisis consultation is concerned with increasing the consultee's knowledge about a particular problem or case. Caplan's model probably needs some adaptation for use in schools and would need to be flexibly applied to a specific school situation with consideration for the counselor's personality and competence.

NEED

Several needs for this professional are indicated. Studies referred to by Lister indicate the need to support the counselor in achieving professional identity, particularly the entering professional in carrying out the specialized and unique responsibilities for which he has received preparation. Experienced counselors also benefit from continued support and stimulation designed to help them remain open to developments and innovations in counseling and related fields. Continued development of counseling competency, begun in his supervised practicum, may also be carried out with the facilitative consulting relationship. Crisis situations not only require support for the practitioner but also afford a special opportunity for growth if he emerges from the crisis more capable of handling similar situations instead of avoiding the problem in the counseling relationship and thereby experiencing defeat himself, or by passing the problem to another when he is competent to handle it himself.

Other functions are suggested by the consultant model. As a result of leadership provided by APGA in the development of the role and standards for preparation of support personnel for counselors (Kennedy 1967), it is anticipated that persons with less than professional preparation will begin assuming responsibilities under the supervision of the counselor. Consultation, both directly to these support personnel as well as to the counselor responsible for their supervision, is possible. Furthermore, counselors are frequently asked to discharge a professional responsibility in supervising practicum students in counseling. This may lead to a need for consultation, particularly in support of the counselor in demonstrating his professional role. It is also suggested that the consultant may carry a counseling load of the type served by those with whom he would be consulting. He may also consult with others in the school system not specifically working in the pupil personnel division, but requiring consultation in the area of counseling and guidance services.

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As this is a new role in an emerging and dynamic profession, little research has been done. There are very few references available in the area of "counseling and guidance consultation" particularly on the secondary level. Literature pertaining to consultation may be found in areas such as medical, psychiatric, public health, social work, psychology, business and education. There is some material available in the area of elementary guidance (Faust 1967, Dinkmeyer 1968). Myrick (1970) describes a case study in which the counselor-consultant in the elementary setting provided consultation for teachers, resulting in significant changes in behavior for the student as well as professional growth for the teachers.

Consultation for school counselors may be developed by building on concepts and practices in other fields. From the groundwork laid in these fields and the efforts toward the development of this professional role made at the University of Florida and elsewhere, further development of the role and responsibilities, standards for preparation, and implementation of the role of the consultant in the field where the role does not now exist all seem to be indicated.

NEEDS OF COUNSELORS

In the development of any service, the needs of those to be served are to be considered. Is there any reason to believe that counselors would utilize the consultation of a guidance consultant any more than he does the consultation of similar professionals related to his functioning? School psychologists, caseworkers, special education workers, mental health staff, and counselors in related areas such as vocational rehabilitation and the employment service are available to counselors for special problems. Are they presently being utilized in an effective way? Possibly in addition to direct consultation on problems and programs, the consultant could help the counselor use these co-workers more effectively.

Counseling, specifically in the guidance function, is a relatively new competency possessed by guidance personnel. In the present stage of development of this profession, with the continued need for the counselor to communicate his professional role to school administrators and professional staff as well as lay people such as school board members and parents, are the counselors still defensive? Will they utilize the opportunity for a very close, revealing relationship with a colleague, even if he is seen as a "peer"? If the counselor finds difficulty performing the counseling function in the guidance service, feelings of guilt, rationalization, and related defensive behavior may block the use of consultant services when available, even when the consultant has only professional functioning and ethical concerns and no evaluative responsibility. Is it possible that the consultant, as proposed in the model, is the most likely person to provide the assistance which will be accepted by the counselor? It appears there are implications for the selection of consultants as to personality, personal and professional adequacy as well as acquired competency in consulting and counseling. This selection may be even more critical than the selection of those to be prepared for counseling, due to the sophisticated sensitivity of the counselor to interpersonal relations.

Will practicing counselors take the time to prepare properly for the utilization of the services of a consultant? The most effective use of a consultant occurs when proper preparation for, implementation of, and evaluation of his service are accomplished. This will require time from the crowded schedule of the counselor. Counselors are overloaded in most situations and concrete benefits in terms of more efficient use of his time would have to occur just in order to compensate for the time spent with the consultant. More may be required to carry out duties, both intensively and extensively, which he may not presently be fulfilling but which may increase his effectiveness, Will the consultant become a helping person to the counselor in such a way as to relieve some of the ineffective, groping, or

avoidance behavior exhibited by the counselor struggling with a problem about which he is upset? Can the consultant facilitate functioning in an area of professional competence which will lead to more effective and efficient services? Will the consulting result in more effective communication of the role and competencies of the counselor and thereby lead to more effective and efficient services? Demonstrations by the consultant, interaction with other counselors in in-service seminars, and self-evaluation, leading to continued development of the competencies already held by the counselor, may be the result of consultation. One very important competency would be to convey the appropriate role. Consultation with administration, both directly and accompanying the counselor, may lead to increased understanding by the administrator as to competencies which could be exercised if the counselor's functioning were properly implemented.

OBTAINING CONSULTATION

If there is, in fact, a felt need for guidance services counsultation on the part of an individual counselor, the administration of an individual school, and the school system, this will need to be made known and many parts of the total structure will likely be involved in the relationship. How will the consultant enter? Is he routinely assigned or invited into a situation? What will be his responsibility and to whom will this responsibility be discharged? How will he be seen by others in the system? Who decides what problem or problems he will work on? Why is he being called in? Some problems of this type and others related to the problem of entry are suggested by Gibb (1959).

Blaha (1952) indicates that a consultant may be helpful in many situations. A group (or individual) may need help to evaluate a program to determine real problems, assistance in defining and limiting a recognized problem, or assistance in presenting a problem which could be better introduced by an outsider due to antagonisms within the group. While working on a problem, the consultee may need technical assistance or specific information, a "shot in the arm" to maintain confidence in the value of further effort, or the group may have exhausted it's own resources. Later, assistance in determining the next step or follow-up activities and assistance in summing up and evaluating work accomplished may be helpful.

More generally, facilitating and possibly increasing competence in problem solving, assistance in acquiring or providing technical information and specialized skills, adjusting to new power relationships, making new personal adjustments, and constructive relations with groups representing the minority point of view (in terms of proposed solutions), are indicated by Curtis (1953) as problem types where consultation may provide some help. While some of these are not directly related to the more normal "helps" provided by the model of consultation indicated for this paper, there may be some implications. We may, for example, want to place more emphasis on assisting the counselor in his professional adjustment than on his personal adjustment although these are probably closely related.

If the consultant is to be employed by a school system, many of the following considerations should be made. It would be important that a given school and the counselor will be involved in determining need. The consultant can function more effectively if there is a definite understanding and agreement that a consultant is needed, why a consultant is needed, and if possible, agreement by the consultee as to the criteria for the selection of the consultant. While the consultant may provide assistance in the following, certainly the consultee will be vitally involved in and should assume great responsibility for recognizing and stating what is wanted, and the framework within which the consultant is invited to participate. In addition,

the consultee and consultant together may best define the limitations of the consulting responsibility.

The form and nature of the invitation will significantly affect the ensuing relationship between the consultant and the consultee, particularly an individual counselor. While manipulation should be expected by the consultant, he may also be sensitive to attempts to place him in a position where he cannot be effective at all.

INFORMING THE CONSULTANT

If the consultant is invited to enter, what are the steps to be taken to use him most effectively? How is he informed about the perceived problems and relationships relevant to the situation? How does he learn about adequacy indicated by successful functioning already in operation? What has been done so far that is successful and what needs strengthening? What relationships exist and where may they be facilitated? What is the consultee's knowledge of the existing situation? What are the characteristics unique to the consultee's environment which effect his functioning? Are there situations when elaborate preparations for the consultant are unnecessary, impossible or even detrimental to his functioning?

Blaha (1952) gives some suggestions for direction with these questions in mind. All concerned with the situation should be informed and proper clearance may be indicated in many instances. After the consultant enters a system and his role, responsibilities, and limitations are understood, clearance may not need to be obtained each time. Certainly communication which is appropriate and ethical is facilitative and should be implemented. The consultant could be expected to be more efficient if he can know who the consultee is, be briefed as to what has been done to date, be given a statement and origin of the problem, limitations perceived, orientation to the environment, relevant philosophy as perceived by the practitioner in that environment, and pertinent policies. Limitations as to competency and responsibility of the consultant should be understood, possibly before the brief is prepared for the consultant. Certainly this needs to be clarified before the consultant assumes responsibility for providing consultation. The consultant also needs some free time within the environment to explore the situation.

More concrete information such as suggestions pertaining to how the consultant may function most effectively and possibly some suggested procedures may lead to more effective use of the service. He may be provided with a proposed schedule and should be informed about any encroachments upon the time available and time limitations.

The consultant should be made to feel comfortable in the environment or a member of the "consultee" group if one exists. Normal hospitality, indicating that the consultant is really welcome and helpful, will affect his attitude in a positive way.

In the case of a crisis situation, valuable time may be lost if the consultee must spend time preparing for the consultant. The emotional energy is important in a crisis situation and the period of disequilibrium produced by the crisis may be the period when most effective consultation may be carried on. It would be best if clearance, role and responsibility would have been determined beforehand in order that consultation may begin immediately. This is possibly one of the most important reasons for having consultation available and not just called in for planned

sessions. When consultation is very much involved with interpersonal relations as it is in counseling, the crisis situation needs enough emotional charge to arouse the consultee to purposive action, but not allowed to reach a point of psychological rejection. In many cases, the primary task of the consultant will be the psychological integration of the counsultee.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

What is the consultation process? What are some different types of consultation situations? Are there different processes indicated? If the primary task of some cases of consultation involve the psychological integration of the consultee, what is the process involved and what are the limitations placed on the relationship? How may this differ from the counseling relationship? What results may reasonably be expected from the consultation?

Lippitt (1959) defines consultation as a voluntary relationship between a professional helper (the consultant) and the client (consultee), who may be an individual or a group, in which the consultant is helping (attempting to help) the consultee to solve some current or potential problem. The relationship is perceived as temporary. The consultant is an outsider, at least to the extent of not being a part of the hierarchical system in which the consultee is located. Consultation, according to Dinkmeyer (1968) involves sharing information and ideas, coordination, comparing observations, providing a sounding board and developing tentative hypotheses for action. Emphasis is placed on joint planning and collaboration and not providing ready answers. As to function, he feels it is not necessary to distinquish between counseling and consulting. Faust (1967) sees a differentiation primarily in focus. In consultation, the focus remains on the client of the consultee, while in counseling, the focus is on the counselee. Consultation then focuses on a third party or a problem.

Chaplan reports that his model was developed in mental health consultation and is primarily crisis oriented. While he mentions non-crisis oriented consultation, most techniques and relationships described are related to the crisis situation. Insley (1959) differentiates case and program types of consultation for social work consultation in public health. Kaczkowski (1967) indicates that as a consultant in an elementary school, a counselor has two main activities: mediating between the child and his concern for significant others, i.e., parents and teachers, and helping teachers and administrators examine the impact and consequences of instructional procedures on children. Several common elements seem apparent in each of the approaches. In consultation, the consultant is working with another professional, involving a third person or problem. The consultee is really asking, "Can you help me grow professionally?" The consultant may be able to provide the specific kind of human relationship within which professional growth is possible. The consultee is not asking for personality restructuring, and if this is indicated and a felt need arises, all seem to agree that the consultee should be referred.

It is important that recommendations arising from the consultant-counselor relationship come from both the consultant and the counselor. If the consultee is a group, then they should be involved in making the recommendations. The consultee should have his own wisdom generated and not just have been "taught" by the consultant.

CAUTIONS IN CONSULTATION

As one considers the questions related to consultation, many concerns become apparent. These formulate cautions, some of which are rather clear and some more obscure.

Ethical considerations such as confidentiality, transference-countertransference, responsibility for knowledge of professional competency in handling a case, and the personal psychological health of the practitioner will concern the consultant. What is his professional responsibility, where does his ultimate loyalty lie, and where is his "professional" support when questions of his ethical functioning arise?

Benne (1959) differentiates between ethical and technical problems. Ethical considerations are based on "right" and "wrong" and "should be." Technical concerns are with means and ends. The consultant should be aware of his position with regard to these considerations.

It appears that many consulting situations involve personality dynamics, both between the professional being consulted and his client, and between him and his professional colleagues. Where he may be working with other disciplines, the consultant must be careful to protect each discipline involved, yet work to derive the benefits of all who contribute. Personal antagonism between the consultee and others in his environment will likely arise. Relationships with administrative and supervisory personnel as well as concern for the evaluative element will enter the concerns involved in consultation. It will be important for the consultant to be aware of areas where philosophies are in common agreement and where disagreements exist. He may be helpful in locating the "common ground" from which more effective communication and relationships may develop. In working with groups, a consultant will need to be sensitive to where the real leadership lies and what the attitudes are in relationship to existing and real leadership.

The consultant will encounter attempts to manipulate him and according to Caplan (1959) may need to allow this manipulation until the appropriate relationships develop with the consultee. When power struggles exist in the environment, what are the consultant's guidelines as to what he supports? The points of view supported may have important implications for who is supported, and the consultants "expertise" may carry considerable weight.

Maintaining the appropriate "emotional charge" in a crisis consultation situation will likely require a great deal of sensitivity on the part of the consultant. This will involve the development of a close relationship with the individual consultee or real sensitivity to the group feeling if the consultee is a group.

In developing the role and implementing this role in the field, the consultant will need some degree of humility. He most likely will be better prepared than the fellow professionals with whom he works and very likely will be more sophisticated in his understanding of human relations than the administrators with whom he will come in contact. It will be important for him to represent his own discipline as well as "be" himself along with his own philosophy, yet respect the competencies and responsibilities of those with whom he comes in contact, both personally and with respect to disciplines.

How will the consultant feel about consultees who seem to choose a direction or activity with which the consultant does not agree and which may not follow his "consultation?" He will need to "allow" the consultee his own decision while supporting himself with the realization that the professional must be responsible for his own decisions. Sharing in the presentations of recommendations to the next level of functioning will likely relieve some of this type of stress.

How can the consultant meet his own needs of desiring to help others? If the final decisions are up to the consultee and the consultee is the one who "does something," can the consultant feel his efforts and his "self" in the relationship, i.e., his "investment", is paying off? This probably will depend a great deal on the personal and professional adequacy felt by the consultant as a helping person. It will very likely not differ much from how a counselor feels when he facilitates decision-making in a counselee along with acceptance of the belief that the counselee must assume responsibility for that decision. Possibly a related question must be-Who will consult with the consultant?

AFTER CONSULTATION

It is probably very important, not only as the role of the guidance consultant emerges but also as it develops and adjusts to change, that the process and techniques of consultation of this type be evaluated. This evaluation will be beneficial at points during consultation and as a final step in a particular consulting situation.

Beneficial results from consultation may reasonably be expected or there is no reason for its provision. If consultation is based on need felt by the practitioner, then the meeting of these needs is an appropriate yardstick for evaluation. If the counselor (consultee) is helped to grow professionally, problems are solved because of his increased competency, policies are reasonably adjusted to provide for change, and the consultant has remained in his consulting role, then consultation has been effective. The primary final evaluation is based on increased professional competency by the consultee. Does he just "feel better" or does he return with a similar problem? Does he feel more competent? If he utilizes consultation service again, is it for a different type of problem?

Has the consultant been successful in altering the relationship so that termination on consultation on a particular case or problem leaves the consultee comfortable and feeling confident? Has he left an opening for request for further consultation if the need arises? Has the relationship terminated with a feeling of mutual confidence and respect?

ARE WE READY FOR THIS?

If there is a need for consultation and if this type described is valuable for counselors, other questions emerge. These have implications for directions in the acceptance of the consultant by the profession of counseling as well as by administration.

Basically, the concept of consultants for counselors appears well-founded. The rationale presented by Lister (1968) "makes sense" to this writer. Whether or not the practicing counselor will use the service, the administration of schools will feel that it will really lead to efficiency, and better service to students and school systems will really employ this professional person

remains to be seen. It seems to the writer that this is ample reason for providing publicity as to the development and effectiveness of this professional. Articles for professional journals read by personnel service workers and administrators are necessary. Pilot programs using these consultants may show need for revision of the original concepts which were adapted from consultation in other disciplines. Those consultants coming from early professional preparation programs in consultation and moving into various types of situations should be followed up for determining adjustments to local situations and also to determine the degree of "backsliding" if it has occurred.

If the present concept will eventually require adaptation, I believe it will be in the direction of support from counselor education programs. It seems that important implications exist for the relationship with counselor education institutions and inservice assistance for the counselor. Since the primary result of consultation for counselors should be professional growth, a mutually informative and "growth" producing relationship, sensitive to the constant change in the profession and our society, seems imperative. The consultant may function effectively as a bridge between the counselor and his professional growth. This may be more easily implemented when a consultant is provided in the school system, possibly with some relationship with the counselor preparation institution.

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